

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
for the  
District of New Mexico

United States of America  
v.

Cristhian ORTEGA-Lopez  
Adrian


Case No. **25-330 MJ**

Defendant(s)

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of February 28, 2025 in the county of Dona Ana in the  
State and District of New Mexico, the defendant(s) violated:

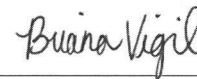
*Code Section*  
18 U.S.C. §§ 922 (g)(5)

*Offense Description*  
unlawful for an alien, illegally or unlawfully in the United States,  
to possess a firearm and/or ammunition.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.



Complainant's signature

Briana Vigil, HSI Special Agent

Printed name and title

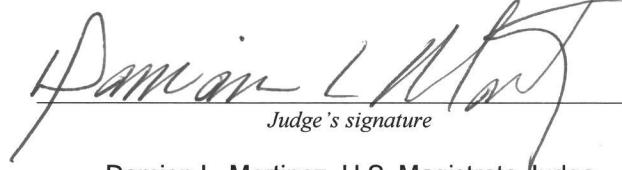
Telephonically sworn and electronically signed before me.

Date:

2 March 2025

City and state:

Las Cruces, New Mexico



Judge's signature

Damian L. Martinez, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

VS

Cristhian Ortega-Lopez

1. On January 2025, Homeland Security Investigations Las Cruces initiated an investigation into Cristhian Ortega, following the receipt of an anonymous tip submitted on the HSI Tip line. The tip alleged that Cristhian Ortega, an illegal alien from Venezuela and a suspected member of a criminal gang, was residing with other illegal aliens in the United States unlawfully at the address located at 1220 N. Reymond St., Las Cruces, New Mexico and was in possession of firearms.
2. Based on the findings of this investigation, it was determined that Cristhian Ortega unlawfully entered the United States on December 15, 2023. Due to overcrowding, Ortega was released pending removal proceedings on or about December 18, 2023. On April 24, 2024, Cristhian Ortega filed a request for immigration relief, which will be considered by an immigration judge as part of his removal proceedings. As of present, Cristhian Ortega remains subject to pending removal proceedings. According to Cristhian Ortega's biographic data, he listed 1220 N. Reymond St., Las Cruces, NM 88005, as his address.
3. Cristhian Ortega has been observed on his social media accounts in possession of firearms. Specifically, on December 30, 2024, Cristhian Ortega uploaded a collection of photographs and videos to his personal Facebook account featuring himself and other Venezuelan illegal aliens, at what appears to be a Shooting Range in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in possession of firearms and a large amount of handgun ammunition and rifle

ammunition. The images and video listed below, posted by Cristhian Ortega on December 30, 2024, were retrieved from Cristhian Ortega's personal Facebook account.

4. In one image Cristhian Ortega posted on Facebook, Cristhian Ortega is observed holding a dark in colored AR-15 style rifle in one hand and a black semi-automatic handgun in his other hand. (Exhibit 1)
5. A second image Cristhian Ortega published on his Facebook contained a photo showing a hand holding miscellaneous caliber ammunition and what appears to be larger amounts of the same type of ammunition in open containers in the background. (Exhibit 2)
6. In an additional photo posted on Cristhian Ortega's Facebook, Cristhian Ortega is observed holding a black semi-automatic handgun, which appears to be identified as a Sig Sauer P365 handgun, while Effren Montilla-Castillo, identified as an illegal alien, is holding another semi-automatic handgun with an optic in his hand. The individuals' faces are not visible in the photograph, but they have been identified by both of their visible hand tattoos and the watches they have worn in other photos. (Exhibit 3)
7. On the same date, at the Shooting Range, a video posted by Cristhian Ortega on his personal Facebook account shows him shooting an AR-15 style rifle with a suppressor. The AR-15 style rifle was confirmed to be a firearm with some type of attached suppressor based on the video. The video depicts Cristhian Ortega discharging the AR-15 style rifle in the beginning, followed by the replacement of the magazine with a new one, after which he proceeds to continue firing the weapon with a silenced report clearly audible from the shot. A projectile can be observed and heard striking the metal silhouette targets down range. Cristhian Ortega has been positively identified in the

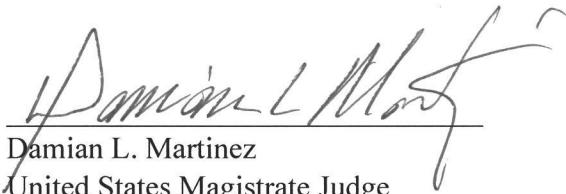
video based on his distinctive tattoos, including tattoos on his left hand and left arm which are visible in the video. (Exhibit 4)

8. Upon further investigation of Cristhian Ortega's social media accounts, Agents identified videos and photographs on his personal social media accounts and the other illegal aliens living with him at the aforementioned address that displayed clear indicators of Tren de Aragua (TdA), a transnational criminal organization and U.S. designated Foreign Terrorist Organization from Venezuela. Observations observed on Cristhian Ortega and the illegal aliens he resided with include tattoos, clothing apparel, and displaying hand gestures, commonly associated with TdA. These visual indicators, widely recognized as symbols of TdA and consistent with existing intelligence, provide strong evidence of Cristhian Ortega's potential connection to TdA.
9. On February 28, 2025, during a post-Miranda interview, Cristhian Ortega advised that in or around December 2023, he illegally entered the United States from Mexico by climbing over a barbed wire fence in Texas. He eventually began living at a residence in Las Cruces, New Mexico. While living at the residence, he was introduced to an acquaintance who possessed a large number of firearms. Ortega advised that the acquaintance allowed him to hold and sometimes shoot various firearms. Four firearms that had been seized from the acquaintance's residence on February 28, 2025, following the execution of a search warrant were displayed in front of Ortega and he admitted that he recognized all four of the firearms. He was also shown various photographs of him holding and shooting firearms. He confirmed that three of the firearms in front of him were the same firearms depicted in the photographs, specifically a Geissele SD 5.56 rifle,



a Sig Sauer P365 9mm handgun, and a Volquartsen VT2 .22 caliber rifle. Ortega admitted that he knew it was illegal for him to possess firearms.

10. Special Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) were contacted and advised that Sig Sauer P365 firearms are not manufactured in the state of New Mexico and therefore would have traveled in and affected interstate commerce. Similarly, the ATF Special Agents further advised that components making up ammunition, specifically gun powder, are not commercially manufactured in the state of New Mexico and therefore would have traveled in and affected interstate commerce.
11. Based upon the above information, your affiant believes that on or about December 30, 2024, Cristhian Ortega, an illegal alien, illegally or unlawfully in the United States, unlawfully possessed firearms and ammunition that had moved in or affected interstate commerce, in violation of Title 18 U.S.C. § 922 (g)(5). This violation is believed to have occurred in the city of Las Cruces, in the County of Dona Ana, in the District of New Mexico.
12. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the purpose of establishing probable cause as set forth herein, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I make this affidavit on the basis of my personal knowledge and information furnished to me by other law enforcement officers.

  
Damian L. Martinez  
United States Magistrate Judge  
District of New Mexico

  
Briana Vigil  
Special Agent  
Homeland Security Investigations

Exhibit 1

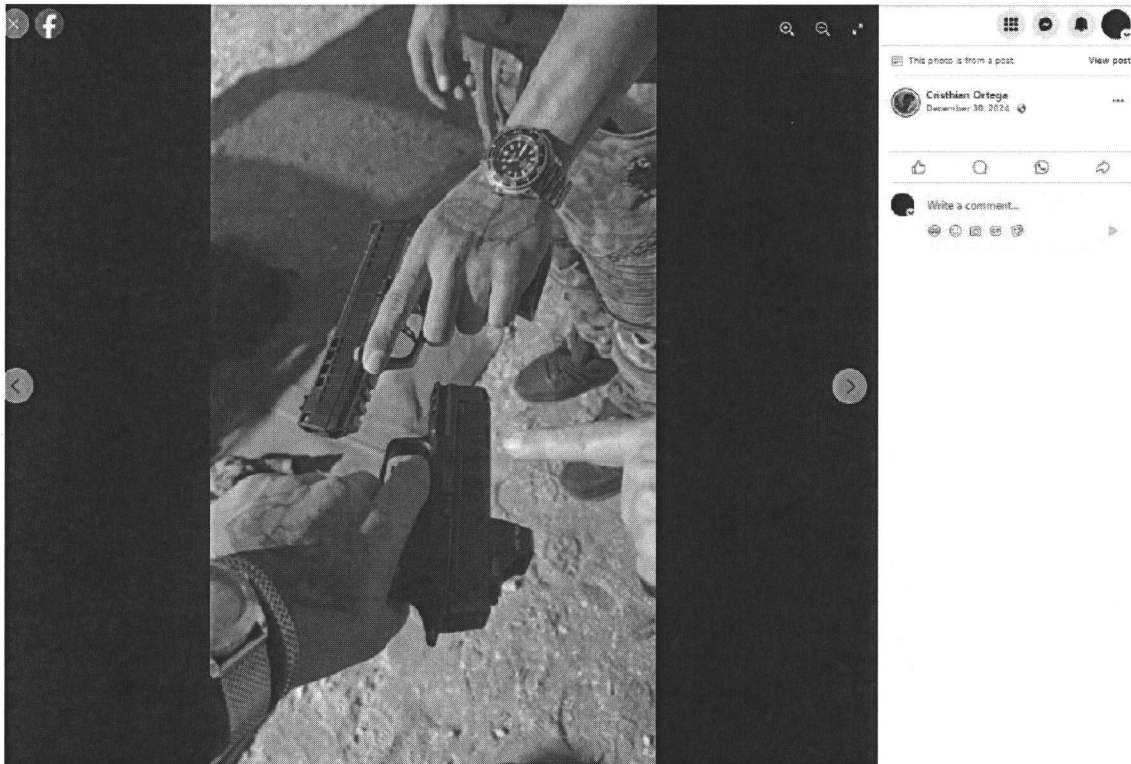


**Exhibit 2**





**Exhibit 3**





**Exhibit 4**

